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ABSTRACT

This Texas Education Agency (TEA) pilot study sought to identify a valid, reliable, and manageable way to use the expanding "effective schools" database to guide school accreditation development. The theoretical basis for the incorporation of effective schools correlates into the Campus Effectiveness Model (CEM). The underlying philosophy of this accreditation/development model were discussed. In addition, the use of CEM in three inner-city elementary schools was analyzed. Data were sorted into six interpretative categories based on effective schools' correlates. Data sources included onsite team observations, principal interviews, teacher group interviews and opinionnaires, student group interviews and opinionnaires, parent group interviews, and school records (for example, meeting minutes, standardized test scores, curriculum guides, teacher absenteeism, discipline problems, and so forth). The study concluded that CEM implementation led to agreement among accreditors. Furthermore, a positive relationship existed between the results of pupil performance and CEM implementation. This study suggested that a state can, by judicious use of research, develop a policy that connects school accreditation to student outcomes and correlates of effective schools research through the compilation of data derived from six sources. (JAM)

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EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS RESEARCH AS A BASIS FOR STATEWIDE ACCREDITATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS: REPORT OF A PILOT STUDY (1987)

Presented to

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Introduction/Background

During the last decade, two major trends have dominated the American educational scene: (1) statewide reform and (2) effective schools research. Is it possible that the two might be merged to maximize needed educational improvement? The answer is "yes." Effective schools research has evolved as a sound theoretical base which can be used to shape state policy, which, in turn, can influence educational practice. The current study is a pilot test of such a process.

Texas, not unlike most states, continues to implement changes in its educational system as mandated by the pervasive reforms of the early 1980's. Recently (1987) the state turned its attention to the effective schools research/development base as a guide for shaping its statewide accreditation program. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) selected the research-defined effective schools concepts and "correlates" as the conceptual basis for its statewide efforts to monitor and accredit the schools serving its diverse (and increasingly low income minority) pupil population. Underlining these accreditation efforts was the state's desire to enhance the further development of its declining schools. This particular study, done under contract with the TEA from March 1987-September 1987, focused attention on an accreditation/developmental model at the campus level.

The study sought to identify a valid, reliable, and manageable (time, cost, theoretically sound) way to use the expanding "effective schools" database to guide school accreditation development. The

researchers built the model from two theoretic perspectives: (1) results of effective schools studies as reported in the literature (through 1986), and (2) change process/knowledge utilization models. The change model perspective was employed to accommodate the dynamic and continuing developmental nature of school improvement. The effective schools indicators, besides being used to categorize behavioral observations, provided identifiable and concrete examples (and targets) for school improvement efforts. The pilot test was a "reality test" of a process to collect, at the school site, data to help the TEA make school accreditation decisions while at the same time provide a systematic approach for effecting school improvement.

Objectives

This paper has several objectives: (1) to discuss the theoretical basis for the incorporation of effective school correlates into the Campus Effectiveness Model (CEM) and to explain the theoretical bases for its evaluative philosophy as well as its underlying change/replication model; (2) to describe the design/implementation of the CEM and discuss its use as an accreditation/development model; and (3) to discuss the results of the pilot study of three inner city elementary schools.

Theoretical Frameworks

Effective Schools

Recent studies of effective schooling continue to embellish the early portrait of an effective school as one of wholistic excellence -- one in which the administrative leadership, instructional focus,

climate, expectations, and assessment energize the organization toward maximum student achievement.

Each of these five correlates to effectiveness complements and enriches the other four, so that the "whole" (effectiveness) is discernibly larger, more powerful, than the sum of its parts. In concert, the elements generate a creative, productive tension which, though subtle and rather elusive, produces a visible culture of action-oriented people learning and growing together.

Although each correlate empowers the teaching/learning process in a fundamental way, the effective campus principal has emerged as the sine qua non of excellent schools. The principal provides the voice and the vision which move the school beyond achieving competence to maximizing potential. Such a leader inspires students and staff to embrace the mission/purpose of the school; to awaken their own untapped resources; to reach constantly higher; to trust one another in the pursuit of common goals; and to expect success. In excellent schools, the principal exudes a sense of purpose which lends meaning and import to all dimensions of school life. And he/she rarely, if ever, fails to recognize individual accomplishments which further that purpose.

The effective school radiates an aura of vitality and commitment to excellence in education. Learning takes place in a climate which is orderly, accepting, and motivating. Expectations are high for every member of the school community -- students, staff, even parents. Emphasis on skill mastery and academic achievement permeates every

facet of school life. The school communicates unequivocally that all students -- not just some students -- can and will learn. Student assessment reflects continual monitoring and feedback regarding individual progress, and results of assessment are used to modify and adjust instruction. These characteristics evolve only in schools with visionary leadership which charts a clear course for school improvement and student growth. The Campus Effectiveness model is built upon this philosophy.

Evaluation Philosophy.

The types of data selected for this model include a substantial amount of information representing the perceptions of outside observers as well as members of the school community. Perceptions of both groups provide accounts of school operation which are essential in deriving a wholistic assessment of its effectiveness.

These accounts also offer valuable data for formulating an appropriate plan of action for school improvement. This latter function, of course, embodies the overriding purpose of the entire evaluation process, the school's fundamental investment in such comprehensive scrutiny.

Since human perception serves as the source of such data, the nature of that process must clearly stand as a viable component of evaluation. Dr. Carl Jung's theory of psychological types (July, 1923) offers a rather simple but powerful insight into the mental processes that occur when an individual perceives and judges experiences. Perceiving includes the processes of gaining awareness; judging includes

the processes of drawing conclusions about those perceptions. According to this theory, every individual, through natural preference, perceives experiences in one of two ways: sensing, which creates awareness directly by responding to the five senses; or intuition, which creates awareness indirectly by adding unconscious associations or ideas to the facts. Whether awareness grows from sensing or from intuition, it is reality to the person experiencing it. Jung also identifies two quite different ways to judging those perceptions. The person who depends upon thinking to draw conclusions uses objective, impersonal logic to form judgments. One who prefers to depend on feeling, on the other hand, forms judgments through appreciation, by assigning a personal, subjective value to the perception.

Every adult has developed a unique combination of these mental processes; no two individuals undergo precisely the same experience in any given situation. However, the richness of human diversity is the very element that makes the teaching/learning process so complex. To assess an enterprise as unequivocally human as education by analyzing only the hard data available -- without looking directly at human perceptions of the process -- would produce a judgment based on inadequate information. The "soft" data representing the perceptions of observers and participants provide that vital human link in the process of evaluation. This model emphasizes the value of both "soft" and "hard" data sources.

Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate how this combined process attempts to gain a wholistic picture of school operations which not only stands

as an accurate assessment of effectiveness but also serves as a guide for planning and development, a guide which can lead to significant school improvement.

Observers who gather and interpret data must take into account the fact that the "soft" data reflect human perceptions from several diverse vantage points. Each person or group represented perceives reality in a slightly different way. (See Figure 1). Each perception adds a valuable dimension to the "whole" which is the target of assessment; collectively, all perceptions provide useful information for planning and development. Inconsistency of perceptions may even disclose areas of need more precisely than does consistency.

The process of integrating "soft" data funnels into final judgments in a complex but systematic way as demonstrated by Figure 3. It begins with recording perceptions of members of the school community: principal, teachers (collectively and individually), support staff, students, and parents. Perceptions of outside observers, partially formed by their own personal experiences and thinking styles, add a second dimension. Interpretations of school perceptions by outside observers further complicate the process, as those interpretations are filtered through observers. Finally, the observers' perceptions, together with responses from members of the school community, must be analyzed in relation to hard data that may either support or contradict the "soft" data. The entire process culminates in the observers' judgments regarding the character of the total school experience.

Each source of data offers valuable insight into school effectiveness. The complexity of integrating the information to formulate a wholistic assessment of the school clearly reinforces the richness and complexity of the process which the Campus Effectiveness Model attempts to evaluate.

Change. Underlying the Campus Effectiveness Model is a final theoretical framework of change conceptualized by Achilles and Norman (1974). This change theory influenced the development of the CEM and provided the framework for its use as a developmental model for school improvement.

Achilles and Norman (1974) conceptualized a change "model" that combined key elements of change theory on one axis and elements of communication theory on another axis. (See Appendix A). The model demonstrates three general levels of intensity of communication: dissemination, demonstration, and diffusion. In addition, the idea of moral stages of development (Kohlberg, 1975) reinforced the idea that personal acceptance is essential to successful implementation. Figures 2-4 demonstrate the basic framework of these models.

The authors adapted the models in Figures 2 and 3 to create a procedure for tracking the progress of implementation of key program elements (see the top line of Figure 4 -- Administrative Leadership, School Climate, etc.). The conceptual base (Figure 2) suggested procedures for moving through the three levels of change: (1) awareness/interest (using large group meetings, an "inspirational" and creditable "sender," newsletters, news stories, etc.); (2) evaluation/trial

(convincing, building conviction, persuading by building a core group, observing exemplary sites, etc.); and (3) adoption/adaptation (implementing, training, coaching, etc.) (Achilles & Duvall, 1982).

The connection between this theoretical base and the Campus Effectiveness Model centers on the idea of need identification. Through the accreditation (evaluation) process specific areas of school weakness are pinpointed. Areas are targeted for improvement and the school is provided with a systematic model for improvement. It is suggested that the development follow three major steps as outlined by Achilles and Norman (1974): dissemination, demonstration, and diffusion.

Data Collection

Data were collected by teams of four trained observers/data collectors who obtained data from between two and six data sources. Multiple data sources provided a "triangulation" for each category or behavioral category. Data sources included: (1) observation on site by a team, (2) principal interview, (3) teacher group interview and opinionnaire, (4) student group interview and opinionnaire, (5) parent group interview, and (6) school records (e.g., minutes of meetings, ADA, standardized test scores, curriculum guides, teacher absenteeism, vandalism, discipline, etc.). The five principal "correlates" of effective schooling plus home-school cooperation and staff development were the general categories for data collection. Behavioral indicators from the research and literature were grouped into the categories as bases for determining the existence of each of the correlates.

Student opinionnaires employed a yes/no response format; frequency of response was calculated and transferred to a master scoring form. Other data sources used a five-point response (little or no evidence, seldom in evidence, moderately evident, frequently evident, and strongly evident). Data were transferred to a master scoring form for each observation team member who collected/observed that particular item. Interview questions (principal, students, teachers, parents) were carefully constructed to address specific indicators on the master instrument. Team members discussed and processed the data (and specific examples) and reached consensus on the observable results. "Hard" data, such as attendance, vandalism, etc., were used to guide consensus. Post hoc observation team members used gross categories of student outcome data (Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills, or TEAMS, tests are given in odd-numbered grades 1-11) to "verify" some consensus points. Later analyses (e.g., analyses between selected groupings of students: race, sex, etc.) were used to validate observation results where needed.

Scoring

In determining a final rating for each indicator, the team member used the following scale:

5 = No observed need for improvement

4 = Strong evidence observed

3 = Adequate evidence observed

2 = Little evidence observed

1 = Substantial need for improvement

Each team member converted scores from individual records (General Observation, Data Collection, Interview/Opinionnaire) to the Overall Assessment Record. (Appendix B: Overall Assessment Record).

Observers synthesized information from at least three original data sources in forming their individual judgments. Observers entered the final assessment session with certain judgments "temporarily" in place. Consensus, the final stage of evaluation, was an attempt to verify or modify that judgment based on additional information as well as the perceptions of other team members. Team interaction produced a refinement of individual judgments representing the shared perceptions of all observers. The consensus-building process led to a wholistic evaluation of the school which was indeed greater than the sum of its parts. (Refer to Appendix C for the Consensus Rating Chart; see Section I [Administrative Leadership] of the Overall Assessment Instrument).

As each sub-section of correlate categories was completed, individual team members were asked to arrive at a wholistic score for the entire sub-section. This score reflected a final judgment of that sub-section which may or may not have represented an average of scores. (See Appendix C). The final step in the evaluation process involved a determination of composite scores for each of the five major correlates of effectiveness and a final composite rating for the school. (Refer to Appendix C: (1) Administrative Leadership Composite Rating and (2) Total Effectiveness by Correlate.)

After the consensus and data verification stages, one team member developed a brief narrative summary to describe and "flesh out" the numbers generated in the reduction of data to the master scoring format. Simultaneously, another team member developed a "profile" of each school, plotting that school's outcomes (from a low of 1 to the high of 5) across the six categories (five "correlates" plus a total Overall Rating). (See Appendix C: Summary of Correlates Profile). The narrative summary was developed into the same six categories, plus a general statement that usually addressed some school contextual information (neighborhood, age of facility, etc.).

Pilot Study

The Pilot Study, conducted by four teams in three initial elementary sites provided consistent results.

Table 1 graphically portrays each school's profile as determined by consensus scores from each correlate of the CEM as well as a composite score for each school. Table II compares the grade equivalent scores in language for each school by grade; Table III provides similar information for mathematics.

A comparison of Table I results with the results for both Tables II and III indicates that the highest ranking school on the CEM (School B) also ranks highest on Language (Table II) as well as Math (Table III) scores. Similarly, the lowest ranking elementary school (School A) ranks lowest on both language and math scores.

Table IV provides data for the three schools on the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) test for both

Reading/Language Arts and Math. Data are presented as percentage of students mastering subtests.

A comparison of Table I with Table IV indicates that the highest ranking school on the CEM (School B) also ranks highest on the TEAMS scores in all grades for Reading, in grade 3 for Mathematics, and in grades 3 and 5 for Writing (only one point below highest score in grade 1). Similarly, the lowest ranking school (School A) also ranks lowest on six of the nine scores.

Since all schools in the study were of similar racial, economic balance, the researchers did not feel a need to disaggregate data in determining performance rankings for each school. Table V provides data relative to the ethnic/economic percentage for all schools.

Conclusions

This TEA pilot suggests the following:

1. The process is feasible.
2. With training, team members achieve inter- and intra-rater agreements.
3. There seems to be a positive relationship between pupil performance as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and/or the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) and the results of applying the accreditation instruments and process.

The pilot test suggests that a state can, by judicious use of research, develop a framework for policy that connects school accreditation to two separate campus characteristics: student outcomes

and key elements of effective schools as identified through compilation of data from six data sources built upon effective schools research results. That being so, state reform movements can clearly augment school improvement by pursuing solutions grounded in effective schools that research.

Comparison of Elementary TEA Pilot

Schools by Grade Level Score: Language

	School A	School B	School C
Grade 1	1.9	2.7	2.7
Grade 2	2.7	3.3	2.9
Grade 3	4.4	5.8	4.5
Grade 4	5.2	5.8	5.4
Grade 5	6.3	7.6	7.2

Table 2: Iowa Test of Basic Skills
Language Total

Comparison of Elementary TEA Pilot Schools by

Grade Level Score: Mathematics

	School A	School B	School C
Grade 1	1.9	2.4	1.9
Grade 2	3.1	3.1	3.5
Grade 3	4.0	4.6	4.2
Grade 4	4.8	5.2	5.2
Grade 5	6.0	7.7	6.6

Table 3: Iowa Test of Basic Skills
Mathematics Total

TABLE IV

Comparison of Elementary TEA Pilot Schools by

1987-88 Grade Level TEAMS Scores

		School A	School B	School C
Reading	Grade 1	68	71	62
	Grade 3	45	76	63
	Grade 5	74	85	84
Mathematics	Grade 1	89	79	78
	Grade 3	54	77	70
	Grade 5	74	80	95
Writing	Grade 1	87	86	61
	Grade 3	30	62	56
	Grade 5	57	85	77

TABLE V

Comparison of Elementary TEA Pilot Schools by

Ethnic/Economic Percentage

	Ethnicity					Economic	
	*A1	A	B	H	W	Free Lunch	Reduced Lunch
School A	0	0	26	59	14	67	6
School B	0	6	85	0	9	63	8
School C	0	1	2	87	10	80	9

*A1 = American Indian
A = Asian
B = Black
H = Hispanic
W = White

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX C

Figure Captions

Figure 1. The flow of perceptions to data.

Figure 2. The process of compiling data.

Figure 3. The process of reaching consensus on data.